

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 4, 7-10, 24, 25 and 27 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Please amend Claim 1 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a recoverable and reusable unit performing a function independent of determining the degree of deterioration of said recoverable and reusable unit, which is recoverable and reusable after use of said unit and said apparatus in an environment, depending on the degree of deterioration of said unit due to the environment in which said apparatus is used, wherein said recoverable and reusable unit is an optical member; and used; and

deterioration indicator means for indicating the degree of deterioration of said recoverable and reusable unit due to the environment in which said apparatus is used before said unit is reconditioned for reuse;

deterioration indicator means for determining the degree of deterioration of said recoverable and reusable unit before said unit is reconditioned for reuse by permitting a determination of the degree of deterioration thereof,

    said deterioration indicator means being disposed inside said apparatus,

    the deterioration-resisting power of said deterioration indicator means that deteriorates over time due to the environment in which said apparatus is used being less than or equal to the deterioration-resisting power of said recoverable and reusable unit,

    said deterioration indicator means being arranged so as not to participate in any functions of said apparatus during use of said apparatus, and

said deterioration indicator means ~~determining the degree of deterioration of said recoverable and reusable unit before said unit is reconditioned for reuse by permitting a determination of the degree of deterioration thereof having a property which is a measure of the deterioration of said deterioration indicator means due to the temperature and/or humidity of the environment in which said apparatus is used.~~

2. (Cancelled).

3. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said deterioration indicator means is arranged to be mountable and dismountable on and from a body of said apparatus either singly or together with said unit and is formed in such a shape as to enable an inspection device to measure a property of said deterioration indicator means representing the deterioration of said deterioration indicator means in a state of being dismounted from the body of said apparatus.

4-10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously Presented) An apparatus including a unit which is recoverable and reusable after use, said apparatus comprising:

an environmental history indicator member disposed inside said apparatus, said environmental history indicator member having a property variable according to an environmental history of use of said apparatus and being arranged so as not to participate in any functions of said apparatus during use of said apparatus,

wherein said unit includes an optical member, and said environmental history indicator member has a property which varies according to an environmental history with respect to temperature and/or humidity,

wherein said environmental history indicator member is an optical filter having a light transmitting property which varies according to an environmental history with respect to temperature and/or humidity.

12. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein the property of said environmental history indicator member deteriorates over time and wherein said environmental history indicator member maintains the state of deterioration of the property.

13. (Previously Presented) An apparatus including a lens unit which is recoverable and reusable after use, said apparatus further comprising:

deterioration indicator means for indicating the degree of deterioration of said lens unit before said lens unit is reconditioned for reuse due to the environment in which said lens unit is used,

said deterioration indicator means being disposed inside said apparatus,  
the deterioration-resisting power of said deterioration indicator means that deteriorates over time due to the environment in which said apparatus is used being less than or equal to the deterioration-resisting power of said lens unit,

said deterioration indicator means having a deterioration property that can be measured and whose measured value represents the degree of deterioration of said deterioration indicator means, and

said deterioration indicator means being arranged so as not to participate in any functions of said apparatus during use of said apparatus.

14-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously Presented) An apparatus comprising:

a recoverable and reusable unit performing a function independent of determining the degree of deterioration of said recoverable and reusable unit, which is recoverable and reusable after use of said unit and said apparatus in the environment, depending on the degree of deterioration of said unit due to the environment; and

a deterioration indicator member disposed inside said apparatus,

the deterioration-resisting power of said deterioration indicator member that deteriorates over time due to the environment in which said apparatus is used being less than or equal to the deterioration-resisting power of said recoverable and reusable unit,

said deterioration indicator member being arranged so as not to participate in any functions of said apparatus during use of said apparatus,

said deterioration indicator member determining the degree of deterioration of said recoverable and reusable unit before said unit is reconditioned for reuse by permitting a determination of the degree of deterioration thereof,,

wherein said unit is a lens unit.

20. (Previously Presented) An apparatus comprising:

a recoverable and reusable unit performing a function independent of determining the degree of deterioration of said recoverable and reusable unit, which is recoverable and reusable after use; and

a deterioration indicator member disposed inside said apparatus to determine the degree of deterioration of said recoverable and reusable unit,

the deterioration-resisting power of said deterioration indicator member that deteriorates over time due to the environment in which said apparatus is used being less than or equal to the deterioration-resisting power of said recoverable and reusable unit, and said deterioration indicator member being arranged so as not to participate in any functions of said apparatus during use of said apparatus, and

wherein the degree of deterioration of said deterioration indicator member is determined by using an inspection device to inspect said deterioration indicator member, so that said deterioration indicator member comprises means for providing a value of the deterioration of said deterioration indicator member in response to inspection by the inspection device before the unit is reconditioned for reuse,

wherein said unit is a lens unit.

21. (Previously Presented) An apparatus including a unit which is recoverable and reusable after use, said apparatus comprising:

an environmental history indicator member disposed inside said apparatus, said environmental history indicator member having a property variable according to an

environmental history of use of said apparatus and being arranged so as not to participate in any functions of said apparatus during use of said apparatus,

wherein said unit is a lens unit, and said environmental history indicator member has a property which varies according to an environmental history with respect to temperature and/or humidity,

wherein said environmental history indicator member is an optical filter having a light transmitting property which varies according to an environmental history with respect to temperature and/or humidity.

22. (Previously Presented) An optical apparatus comprising:

a lens unit which is recoverable and reusable after use; and

a deterioration indicator member disposed inside said apparatus,

the deterioration-resisting power of said deterioration indicator member that deteriorates over time due to the environment in which said apparatus is used being less than or equal to the deterioration-resisting power of said lens unit ,

wherein the service life of said lens unit is affected by an environmental factor,

wherein the environmental factor causes said deterioration indicator member, and said lens unit to deteriorate, and

wherein said deterioration indicator member maintains its state of deterioration even if it is dismounted from said optical apparatus.

23. (Previously Presented) An optical apparatus comprising:

a unit which is recoverable and reusable after use; and

a deterioration indicator member disposed inside said apparatus,

the deterioration-resisting power of said deterioration indicator member that deteriorates over time due to the environment in which said apparatus is used being less than or equal to the deterioration-resisting power of said unit,

wherein the service life of said unit is affected by an environmental factor,

wherein the environmental factor causes said deterioration indicator member and unit to deteriorate,

wherein said deterioration indicator member maintains its state of deterioration even if it is dismounted from said optical apparatus, and

wherein said optical apparatus is an image reading apparatus, photo printer or a video camera.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claims 11 or 21, wherein said apparatus is an image reading apparatus, a photo printer, or a video camera.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein said optical filter as said environmental history indicator member is composed of an ND filter, copper phosphate glass, gelatin or optical glass having a refractive index of substantially 1.6 to 1.65 and an Abbe number of substantially 60.

29. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 21, wherein said optical filter as said environmental history indicator member is composed of an ND filter, copper phosphate glass, gelatin or optical glass having a refractive index of substantially 1.6 to 1.65 and an Abbe number of substantially 60.